

Each month DMME personnel will be conducting monthly safety talks pertaining to Emergency Response and Preparedness. Topic-of-the-Month brochures and safety stickers will be handed out during these talks to help remind you of these critical safety points.



The Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy has developed several award winning mine safety videos. These videos were made possible thru Grants from the Mine Safety and Health Administration and can be found on our website at:  
[www.dmme.virginia.gov](http://www.dmme.virginia.gov)

**Mine Safety Videos:**

- ◆ The Right Choice
- ◆ Step Up To The Plate
- ◆ Lead The Way
- ◆ No Way Out
- ◆ The Miners' Bond



**Additional Information**

For more information on the Virginia Topic-of-the-Month Mine Emergency Campaign, please contact:

Division of Mines  
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# UNDERGROUND

## MINING NEAR GAS WELLS



Virginia Department of  
Mines, Minerals and Energy



May 2017  
Topic-of-the-Month

## Virginia Regulations

- 4VAC 25-101-150 Mining Within 500ft of a Gas Well
- 4VAC 25-101-160 Mining Within 200ft of a Gas Well
- 4VAC 25-101-170 Pillars To Be Left Unmined
- 4VAC 25-101-180 Mining Within 200ft of a Plugged Gas Well

## GAS WELLS IN VIRGINIA

All underground mines in Virginia are affected by gas wells. It takes effective planning and training to ensure safety. During a recent incident there was a breakdown of this process and an unsuspecting crew cut into a well with a continuous miner. The miners had been well trained in emergency procedures and everyone escaped without injury.

A subsequent investigation by company officials, Division of Mines personnel, and representatives of the Mine Safety and Health Administration discovered an issue with gas well mapping at the mine. A well that had been on the mine map for some time had accidentally been removed when the map was updated and reprinted.

The mine remained closed while the well was plugged and until a re-entry plan could be approved by both the Division of Mines and the Mine Safety and Health Administration.

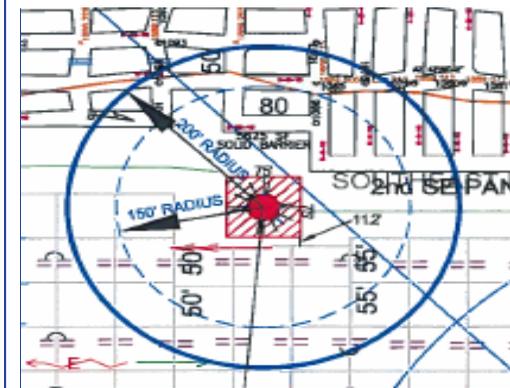


## SAFETY KEYPOINTS

- ⇒ Everyone can contribute to safety. If you notice something or have an idea you should say something.
- ⇒ All Gas Well Plans approved by the Division of Mines require that all miners affected will be trained on the provisions of the plan. If you see that your section is approaching a gas well you should realize that there needs to be an approved plan and everyone must be trained on it.
- ⇒ It is a good idea to perform extra rock dusting while mining near a gas well. This provides an extra measure of safety should the unthinkable happen.
- ⇒ Keep mobile equipment clean. Identify and fix hydraulic or fuel system leaks. Clean mobile equipment, without leaks, has much less potential for catching on fire.
- ⇒ Take fire drills seriously. All underground coal mines must stage regular fire-fighting drills. The only way to be good at something is to practice it over and over. Firefighting drills will reduce response time and, in many cases, save lives, equipment, mines, and jobs.

## KEYPOINTS—continued

- ⇒ It is a good idea to perform extra permissibility checks when mining near gas wells. This is not just in case the unthinkable happens. Often time gas recovery will fracture the seam and allow more gas to escape into mine openings.
- ⇒ An approved gas well plan will include a map with approved projections of how mining will be conducted anywhere within 200ft of the well. All of the approved projections do not have to be mined but no mining is permitted other than exactly what is shown on the approved map.
- ⇒ If the gas well or vertical ventilation hole is intended to degas the seam being mined a separate Gas Well Plan is not necessarily required. Plans to mine near these wells may be included but the miners should still be trained on the safety precautions included in the plan.



## MINE EMERGENCY SAFETY CHECK

T	F	Gas wells remove all natural gas from coal seams and mining near them is not hazardous.
T	F	Gas wells are not hazardous to mines with blowing fans because the gas will be pushed out of the mine through the well.
T	F	All affected miners must be trained on provisions of gas well plans.
T	F	Once a gas well plan is approved, any mining may be done as long as the gas well is avoided.
T	F	Extra care should be taken during rock dusting while mining near gas wells.
T	F	Gas well plans normally must have a 10-day waiting period before being approved.
T	F	Pillars left to protect gas wells should be mined so the gas well is located in the center of the
T	F	Approved gas well plans will never require more frequent methane tests.
T	F	Gas wells must be plugged before mining takes place within 200 ft of a gas well.
T	F	The entries developed adjacent to gas wells must never exceed 20 ft in width.